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ABSTRACT

The intention of this essay is to serve as a guide to the literature treating the historical development of the American public library. It also provides a selective analysis of the literature dealing with the role of the public library. An extensive selected bibliography is included along with an appendix which is a short critical essay on the literature on American social history, especially the literature dealing with reform in America. (Author/SJ)

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THE PURPOSE OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: A REVISIONIST INTERPRETATION

a report prepared for the eric clearinghouse
on library and information sciences

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Prologue

The reader probably deserves some explanation of my intent at the outset. First, this essay is intended to serve as a guide to the literature treating the historical development of the American public library.[1] Second, it is intended to serve as a selective analysis of the extensive literature dealing with the "role" of the public library. Its third, and principle purpose, is to serve as a vehicle for the author's revisionist interpretation of the "public library's role" as it has developed over the past one hundred years.

For nearly a decade now I have been studying the historical development of American libraries. Eventually I hope to pen a "social history of the library in America." That book is some years away yet, but this paper represents a synthesis of my findings relative to one aspect of the library's history in this country. In some cases I have been unable, in the space available here, to verify adequately what may appear to the informed reader as pure intuition. Perhaps some will argue that I should have avoided analysis of motives and intentions under these circumstances, but such an approach would have led to additional straight description of the variety so common to our literature. We've had quite enough of studies which are long on facts and short on interpretation--this study, for better or worse, is intended to reverse that emphasis.

In many ways my "revisionist essay" is little more than an exploratory hypothesis, and as such is selective and interpretive in nature. However, it is unique to the literature of library science as far as I know and, in these trying times for the American public library, would seem to deserve an airing. While my interpretation appears to be unique to library literature, it is not a unique approach to American history. I have systematically read the recent literature on American social history, and this has doubtlessly influenced my work. I have chosen not to document this debt in my already too abundant footnotes, but I do feel that the serious scholar deserves some introduction to the literature that was found to be of particular importance to this study. As a result I have included an appendix, which contains a short critical essay on the literature on American social history, especially the literature dealing with reform in America.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of several of my colleagues who read an earlier draft of this paper and prepared lengthy critiques of my work. These critiques were at once tough-minded and thorough, and while a number of the authors did not agree with my basic thesis, their suggestions proved extremely useful in the revision of this essay. I wish to thank them, while at the same time reminding the reader that I alone am responsible for the final version of this paper.

Those who read the paper and offered many useful suggestions are George Bobinski, State University of New York at Buffalo, Edward Holley, University of North Carolina, Haynes McMullen, University of North Carolina, William Williamson, University of Wisconsin, and Wayne Cutler, University of Kentucky.

I. The Myth of Public Library Origins

American librarians have been generally convinced of the truth of a warm and comforting explanation of the origins, and consequent growth, of the American public library.[2] They believe that although the first public library was founded in a small town in New Hampshire in 1833, the public library movement really was launched in the 1850's, when the Boston Public Library was established by an intelligent middle class led by a group of enlightened civic leaders. In those early years, so the story goes, the library movement was in danger of being captured by an aristocratic intellectual class designing to make the public library an elitist center for scholarly research.

However, this attempt was countered by a group of humanitarian and liberal reformers led by George Ticknor, who insisted that the public library be dedicated to the continuing education of the "common man" and that its collections and services be as broadly popular as possible. They based their demands, so we are told, on the belief that (1) man was infinitely perfectible; (2) that books were the primary means for the intellectual perfection of man; and (3) that books were too expensive for the average man to afford.[3] These basic assumptions, it is generally agreed, are still widely accepted by public librarians whose liberal and idealistic commitment to the public library as

a "people's university" has never faltered from that day to now.

It is not surprising that librarians and library boosters find this rendition of the public library story comforting, for it is quite fashionable to be identified with idealistic and humanitarian reform in this country. Yet, anyone familiar at all with the history and current status of public libraries realizes that much of the story as repeated above simply does not correspond to the facts. One is to believe, for instance, that the public library movement began in a passion of liberal and humanitarian zeal, and yet public libraries were generally cold, rigidly inflexible, and elitist institutions from the beginning. It is also commonly believed that the origins of the public library movement testify to the power of popular democracy in this country, yet, everyone knows that historically only a very small portion of the eligible users have ever crossed the threshold of a public library.

These contradictions give one cause to question the public library myth. In the pages that follow we will attempt to discover the motives of those who founded, nurtured, and guided the public library movement in this country. However, before we begin that exploration it is essential to consider several procedural questions. A serious problem with most historical research on the origins of public libraries in this country is that most scholars have rather indiscriminately lumped favorable conditions and motivations

under the rubric "causal factors". The "causal factors" most generally are: (1) the economic ability to support a library; (2) the rise of universal education; (3) the rise of an urban and industrialized population; (4) vigorous and enlightened civic leadership; (5) interest in self-improvement, etc. Unfortunately, few of these studies bother to separate and analyze the reasons why people wanted to establish libraries.[4]

A second problem relates to the fact that historians and librarians have badly confused, it seems to me, the definition of the word "purpose". The purpose of any institution is the result or effect that is intended or desired. However, many seem to consider the word function to be synonymous with the word purpose. They seem to view functions such as "information services" or "acquisitions" as purposes; i.e., ends in themselves. We would argue that these functions were intended as means to ends, and that no early librarian or trustee really considered, say, "recreational reading" as a purpose.

Recreational reading was acceptable because it would eventually raise the individual's reading tastes (the uplift theory) or because it was a harmless form of entertainment; it contributed to the maintenance of order. As the Trustees of the Boston Public Library wrote in their twenty-third Annual Report (1875), "it is no part of the duty of the municipality to raise taxes for the amusement of the people,

unless the amusement is tolerably clearly seen to be conducive to higher ends of good citizenship, like the encouragement of patriotism, the promotion of public health, of the undermining of immorality."

It would seem that library historians have been too quick to define functions--the means of achieving purposes or ends--as the purposes themselves. If historians would have asked <u>why</u> functions such as the provision of recreational reading, information services and acquisitions were offered--<u>for what purpose</u>--they would have been forced to more thoroughly explore the motives of those who founded and managed America's first public libraries.

II. Everett, Ticknor and the Common Man

Library historians have sought long and widely for the first appearance of the "public library type" in American library history. **But,** sooner or later they all converge on Boston, for everyone agrees that it was the establishment of Boston Public Library which really heralded the beginnings of the public library movement. Since Boston was the unrivaled arbiter of social and intellectual matters in the nation, what she did in the area of intellectual affairs was sure to find imitators throughout the land.

There is also remarkable agreement among all concerned regarding the events leading to the establishment of the Boston Public Library.[5] The first developments were sparked in 1841 by a speech delivered by that articulate and entertaining French ventriloquist turned intellectual missionary, Alexandre Vattemare. His comments, delivered to a capacity crowd at the Boston Mercantile Library on 24 April, outlined his scheme for the international exchange of publications, and initiated a slow but steady stream of events which eventually lead to the establishment of the Boston Public Library.

The next series of pivotal developments in the Library's history occured in 1850-51, when two prominent and extremely influential Bostonians took an interest in the new institution. The first to show a serious concern was Edward Everett, formerly Professor at Harvard, Mayor of Boston, Governor of Massa-

chusetts, Minister to the Court of St. James, just retired President of Harvard, and soon to be Secretary of State of the United States. On 7 June 1851, Everett wrote Mayor Bigelow a long letter containing his thoughts on the public library then being considered by the city administration, transmitted along with a catalogue of his government documents collection; the latter which he proposed to give to the people of Boston.[6] In this letter, Everett outlined his thoughts on the library, and suggested that it should provide access to the intelligent of all classes, but be principally a scholarly research library.[7]

George Ticknor, the leader of the Boston "Brahmins", the intellectual class of that city, now entered the picture, and wrote to Everett arguing firmly that the new library should indeed be the "crowning glory of the school system," but that a novel approach was needed in Boston; one which would be aimed at the "common man" and would provide a wide range of popular and contemporary works to Boston's citizenry. Ticknor's proposal, it is often argued, was based on the twin beliefs that man was perfectable and that books, often too expensive for the common man, were the principle means of obtaining this perfection.

Despite his doubts as to the efficacy of such a plan Everett was persuaded by the force of Ticknor's argument and agreed to allow the library to become a democratic and

popular institution for continuing education. This democratic and optimistic pattern, earlier historians generally conclude, first introduced in Boston was widely influential and generally thereafter set the tone for the development of the philosophy of service in public libraries.

Thus one might be led to believe that George Ticknor, the man who stood at the head of Boston's "Brahmins" almost single-handedly overcame the aristocratic leanings of his fellow trustees, and was able to establish a library which was largely democratic and equalitarian in nature. Ticknor, we are told, was a liberal and a democrat who welcomed change and looked upon human nature with great optimism. Indeed, he is even compared favorably in this regard with Thomas Jefferson.

Contemporary librarians and historians appear to have generally accepted the progressive historians' interpretation of the Boston Public Library's genesis and have proceeded from there to build their analysis of the public library's purpose on what now seems to be a mistaken assessment of Ticknor's reasons for supporting the public library idea.

Historians have taken rather flimsy evidence; the librarian Jewett's remarks to Ticknor himself, and the thoughts of Ticknor's partisan biographer, and built their whole case for the liberal and democratic nature of public library

origins upon it.[8] Study after study contrasts the liberal humanitarian Ticknor with the arch-conservative and aristocratic Everett. Joseph Borome, in his biography of Jewett notes that the liberal sentiments expressed in the Report of 1852 could never have been uttered "had Ticknor not been a member of the Board of Trustees." (p. 76) William Isaac Fletcher, in his popular Public Libraries in America, noted that in the victory of "Mr. Ticknor's views over the skeptical and conservative opinions of his associates" one finds the concept of the "library of the people, by the people, and for the people..." (p. 17). And so on and on it goes, with hardly a pause for reflection on the ridiculous nature of the claim that Ticknor was a leading liberal in Boston society. Indeed, Ticknor himself would probably have resented the suggestion that he was a radical reformer, a "democrat", and a "liberal". For he prided himself in being the leader of Boston's Brahmin class, and his hallmark was a conservative and aristocratic style of life.[9] He and Everett were in reality quite good friends. Neither man was a liberal, neither had much faith in the common man. Perhaps a careful look at Ticknor's life will alleviate some of the confusion.

George Ticknor was the son of Elisha Ticknor, a Calvinist and Federalist, who after teaching school for a

number of years left this low paying profession for the grocery business and became in time a prosperous, if not wealthy, merchant. Elisha, a graduate of Dartmouth College, sent his precocious son, then eleven years old, to his Alma Mater. Later, the elder Ticknor arranged to have George tutored in the classics by Dr. George Sylvester Gardiner, the acknowledged master of Latin and Greek in Boston. After several years of careful study, followed by several more rather desultory years of study of the law, young Ticknor made the fateful decision to abondon the legal profession and simultaneously dismissed the idea of a political career like those chosen by his friends Joseph Story, Daniel Webster, and Edward Everett. Instead, he turned to a life of research and writing--to a "life of letters"--and, as a preliminary to this career went abroad for nearly four years of study, mostly at Göttigen.

Returning to Boston in 1819, George became the Abiel Smith Professor of the French and Spanish Languages and Literatures and Professor of Belles Lettres at Harvard, while his friend Edward Everett became Professor of Greek at the same institution. Ticknor held his post, somewhat uncomfortably at times, until 1835, when with his fortunes bolstered by his wife's inheritance, he resigned to devote himself to research and writing, especially on his monumen-

tal history of Spanish Literature. From the impressive library of his mansion home on Boston's Beacon Hill Ticknor ruled over the city's intellectual life. By the late 1840's he was firmly established as the head of the Boston Brahmin class, and was looked to as the leading arbiter of intellectual and social life in that great city.[10]

Scholar's have repeatedly described Ticknor's class as conservative in politics, aristocratic in social affairs, and characteristically well bred, well educated, well housed, and well heeled. Clinton Rossiter presents an informal inventory of conservative principles in vogue around the middle of the nineteenth century which nicely fit Ticknor's thinking, and the thinking of Boston's Brahmin class in general. They believed in the "inevitability of stratification, persistence of natural inequalities, necessity of aristocracy, importance of religion and morality, sanctity of property, unwisdom of majority rule, urgency of constitutionalism, and folly of all attempts at social and economic leveling."[11] Furthermore, Boston's "best men" generally agreed that Jacksonian democracy was a dangerous experiment indeed, and many aspects of American life disturbed and freightened them.

Boston's Brahmins were especially unhappy about the flood of ignorant and rough immigrants into this country. The Standing Committee of the Boston Public Library noted that the people of Boston spent large sums of money on education each

year, and their reasons were quite explicit: "We educate to restrain from vise, as much as to inculcate sentiments of virtue; we educate to enable men to resist the temptation to evil, as well as to encourage and strengthen the incentives to do good." But, the Committee continued, these times require special vigilance. For the "census report of last year," clearly shows that the increase in foreign population is alarming, and that in time "the preponderance in our city at least will be largely in their favor." It was obvious to the Committeemen that these new residents of Boston were generally unlettered, and "think little of moral and intellectual culture." The Report concludes with the anxious query, "Where is the remedy for this influx of ignorance...?"[12]

George Ticknor agreed with the members of the Select Committee, for he noted that this flood of new immigrants "at no time, consisted of persons who, in general, were fitted to understand our free institutions or to be intrusted with the political power given by universal suffrage." He saw an urgent need to "assimilate their masses" and bring "them in willing subjection to our own institutions."[13] He felt that the "remedy for this influx of ignorance" was education; education through schools, through the church, and any other institution that might be effective in this important crusade.[14]

Ticknor's belief in the library's potential as one means of restraining the "dangerous classes" and inhibiting the chances of unscrupulous politicians who would lead the ignorant astray, explains his insistence that the public library be as popular in appeal as possible. He was committed to the idea that the library's purpose should be to "train up its members in the knowledge which will best fit them for the positions in life to which they may have been born, or any others to which they may justly aspire...."[15]

"It is of paramount importance," Ticknor wrote in the 1852 Report, "that the means of general information should be so diffused that the largest possible number of persons should be induced to read and understand questions of social order...."[16] His disagreement with Everett, a disagreement which has been often distorted by Ticknor partisans, was only over the question of whether or not the library could have any real impact on the masses, who in Everett's mind, had never been particularly interested in books.[17]

Everett very calmly replied, on 26 July 1851, to Ticknor's suggestion of a popular lending library. He wrote, "The extensive circulation of new and popular works is a feature of a public library which I have not hitherto much contemplated." Admitting that the idea "deserves to be well weighed," he still would lean towards making "the amplest provision in the

library for the use of books there."[18] However, he concluded, Ticknor's plan applied only "to a particular class of books, and does not contemplate the unrestrained circulation of those of which the loss could not be easily replaced," and so he agreed to support the proposal.

Ticknor's scheme was intended to satisfy the public's taste - "unless it should demand something injurious" - for "healthy general reading" which would contribute to "moral and intellectual improvement" among the "middling classes."[19] His goal was to contribute to the "uplift" of the masses and to make men sober, righteous, conservative, patient, and devout - in short, to make others more like himself.

Ticknor was a product of his age. He was a "frank elitist living in an age of rampant equalitarianism."[20] Sidney Ditzion's assessment of Ticknor as a man who "loved and trusted the great majority of his fellow citizens" just will not stand the test when compared with the testimony of Ticknor's contemporaries.[21]

In his own day Ticknor was known for what he was; an arrogant patrician. Theodore Parker, one of the leading radical reformers of the age, labeled Ticknor as the "arch-devil of the aristocracy," and John Sibley, the Harvard Librarian, considered Ticknor a narrow minded bigot.[22] Anecdotes relating to Ticknor's elitist attitudes and his aristocratic demeanor abound. One example is the story told by Charles W. Eliot, the President of

Harvard, who once recalled that Ticknor, who was his uncle, had considered it "unseemly" for Samuel A. Eliot (Charles' father) to sing in the little chapel choir and to invite its humbler members to practice in his home.[23]

Ticknor also excluded many prominent Bostonians from his home; men whose influence or opinions he resented. One who suffered ostracism from his home was Charles Sumner. George Hillard, a friend of both men, protested Sumner's social excommunication and received a curt reply from Ticknor, who pointed out that the system for disciplining wayward Bostonians worked nicely and "its severity towards disorganizers and social democracy in all its forms, is just and wise. It keeps our standard of public morals where it should be...and is the circumstance which distinguishes us favorably from New York and the other large cities of the Union where demagogues are permitted to rule...."[24]

Ticknor is often compared with Thomas Jefferson, another immortal name in the pantheon of those who significantly shaped the course of American library history. For instance, one writer suggests that the two men "were inheritors of the eighteenth century belief in the perfectibility of man."[25] This is true only to a certain degree, for Ticknor's cynicism where human nature was concerned is readily decernable. Jefferson was more optomistic, but not unrealistic, for as he noted, man's development

"may proceed to an indefinate[sic] tho' not to an infinate [sic] degree."[26] Both men felt that man could improve through education, but neither had any illusions about his perfectibility.

At the same time, both men did agree on one point; one which is frequently overlooked by library historians: that there would always be an "aristocracy of talent and virtue" which would serve and lead the people. These "best men" must be nurtured and encouraged so that in time they can be charged with the administration of the affairs of their fellows. Occasionally, these "aristocrats of talent & intellect" would be found among the lower classes in society, and it was essential that they be given the means to rise to their natural station. Accordingly, in his Act for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge (1799), Jefferson outlined an educational scheme which was continually more selective as the student proceded through the years, and was designed so that "twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually."[27]

Both men were elitists, who supported libraries and education as one means of raising up an "aristocracy of talent and intellect" which would provide benign and enlightened leadership to the masses. However, a basic difference between the two men lies in the fact that while Jefferson was a Virginia patrician, he was not an authoritarian. He was, what Ticknor was not; a libertarian.[28]

Thus in Ticknor's life and thought we see the basic elements of a philosophy which was to dictate the "purpose" of the public library for more than a century. His authoritarianism and elitism were reflected in his goals for the library:

(1) To educate the masses so that they would follow the "best men" and not demogogues; to "stabilize the Republic and to keep America from becoming another Carthage."[29]

(2) To provide access to the world's best books for that elite minority who would someday become leaders of the political, intellectual, and moral affairs of the nation.

The idea was to induce people to pull themselves upward - morally and intellectually - by their bootstraps. It was only right, of course, that the Brahmin's should establish the nature and direct the course of such institutions.[30]

The rather naive belief in the library's potential as "conservator of order" in an ever more chaotic world, partially explains the care with which the upper classes in American society have retained control of its development.[31] The selection of men for the boards of American public libraries was rarely an exercise in democracy. The Trustee was generally male, "past his prime"; white; Protestant; well educated; wealthy; a member of the social elite; and usually a member of a

profession, or a business executive.[32]

This elitism is still apparent to anyone examining the nature of public library boards. Perhaps the most telling criticism of the myth regarding the public library is the un-representative nature of library boards. Only in isolated instances have public library boards provided representation to all racial, social, religious, and economic groups. Indeed, anyone familiar with the attitudes and motives of those who were generally appointed to guide the development of America's public libraries should not be at all surprised at the fact that these same libraries were characteristically inflexible, coldly authoritarian, and elitist.[33]

The aristocratic and elite nature of the first trustees of America's public libraries was often reflected in the men and women they selected to run their libraries.[34] Out of the characteristics of early trustees and librarians--their education, color, religion, social stature, and wealth--grew the library's basic inability to achieve its clearly articulated purpose. For how could these men hope to reach the masses and guide them through literature when they were not of the masses, and very rarely understood the common people.

In short, the essential problem facing early librarians and trustees, most of them totally unfamiliar with the needs, capabilities, and aspirations of the common man, was how to

operationalize the library's purposes. That is, they now had to design services - functions - which would contribute to the fulfillment of the library's purposes. This was to prove an impossible task for Ticknor and his counterparts throughout the country in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.[35]

While most librarians and trustees conceded the need, for instance, to make plenty of light fiction available to readers if the "middling classes" were to be lured off of the streets and into the library, few were able to conceive of other steps that might be taken to increase library patronage.[36] It remained for a second generation of library managers to design the services which were to characterize public libraries to the present day.

III. Enter the Technicians

The men who were chosen to direct the growing public libraries of the country were dedicated to the founders' conception of the library as a stabilizing agent in society. They were convinced that the library could, and should, be one of the great civilizing forces in American life. Justin Winsor, the patrician who headed the Boston Public, compared the library to a great "engine" which could be wielded for "good or evil" among the "masses of the people."[37] Using a similar analogy later in a Presidential address to the American Library Association (1881), he said that he thought of the public library as "a derick, lifting the inert masses and swinging them round to the sure foundations upon which the national character shall rise."[38]

Winsor's sentiments were repeated again and again in the literature of librarianship prior to 1900. The Trustees of the Leonminster, Massachusetts Public Library felt that the library held great potential for keeping the peace and disciplining the masses. They concluded that "our citizens may rationally prefer to check crime and disorder by ounces of educational prevention, than by pounds of cure in the shape of large 'lockups' and expensive suits before the law."[39]

Similarly, in the influential report on Public Libraries in the United States (1876), J. P. Quincy, writing on "free

libraries," noted that:

> "When Thomas Hobbes declared that democracy was only another name for an aristocracy of orators, he never conceived of a democracy which should be molded by the daily journal and the free library. To the latter agency we may hopefully look for the gradual deliverance of the people from the wiles of the rhetorician and stump orator, with their distorted fancies and one-sided collection of facts."[40]

In the same year, librarians meeting in convention in Philadelphia, claimed just compensation for "keeping order in the community by giving people a harmless source of recreation."[41] One year later, the Library Journal noted that every book "that the public library circulates helps to make Alderman O'Brien and the railroad rioters impossible...."[42]

Thus the public remarks of librarians and trustees were heavily freighted with references to the important stabilizing role the public library could play in the United States. But how exactly was their vision to be made a reality? Providing the answer to that question was to prove a considerable problem.

Everyone involved generally agreed that if the public library was to be a force for good in American life it was essential that the masses be induced to utilize the libraries being established in their respective communities. As one librarian declared, it was his "duty" to "make" people use his library. William I. Fletcher suggested that the librarian was in a position similar to that of the cook wanting to follow an old recipe for cooking a hare. The initial step in the recipe was

elemental: "first catch your hare."[43]

It was further agreed that the most sensible way to entice the "middling classes" into the library was to provision one's shelves with numerous popular works, especially fiction. The inclusion of light fiction in the library's collection sparked a lively debate during the nineteenth century.[44] A few librarians argued that there was no justification for having fiction within the walls of the public library. Most, however, maintained that fiction was to be the "carrot" with which the librarian could catch his "hare". It was what you did with the "hare" after you caught him that counted most.

The principle task was to "improve" his taste for reading. Winsor and Poole wrote frequently and influentially on this subject. As Winsor noted:

> Librarians do not do their whole duty unless they strive to elevate the taste of their readers, and this they can do, not by refusing to put within their reach the books which the masses of readers want, but by inducing a habit of frequenting the library....

Once they are in the library,

> You must foster the instinct for reading, and then apply the agencies for directing it. You can allure, you can imperceptably guide, but you make poor headway if you try to compel....Let the attention be guided, as unwittingly as possible, from the poor to the indifferent, from this to the good, and so on to the best...."[45]

It was their conviction that if the common man could be induced to read the "best" books, he would be more inclined to be

conservative, patriotic, devout, and respectful of property.

But, fiction in libraries had another use as well, for in the eyes of many, even the most desultory reading of fiction was preferable to the "vicious" entertainments designed to satisfy the "lower impulses in human nature." Thus, librarians like Samuel S. Green saw fiction as an aid in keeping order in the community by giving people a harmless source of recreation.[46]

Being thus convinced of the value of good books, librarians were also quick to see the potential danger that "bad" books held for the nation. Consequently they were careful to select only those books best suited for the purpose they had in mind. The word "censorship," now considered taboo by librarians, was frequently used in the pages of the professional literature. It connoted the idea that the librarian was responsible for keeping certain books from the public. As Fletcher noted, the librarian must "accept and exercise full responsibility for the moral character and influence of the library."[47] Thus, the so called "recreational function" of the public library was introduced as one means of improving and controlling the people.

The authoritarian nature of the librarians attitude towards the common man was also frequently evident in the way librarians dealt with their patrons. In the 1880's, William Frederick Poole, one of the nation's leading librarians--a man considered a progressive by many--noted in a speech that he considered

reference work one of his special strengths, and he emphasized the fact that "my door is always open, and anybody seeking for information is encouraged to come to me directly and without formality."[48] What he didn't say in that speech was that he also had a sign placed over his door, which was obviously intended to discourage informality. It read: "Be Short."[49] Earlier, the same librarian had issued the following directive to his staff: "Ample arrangements having been made for washing, the attendants are instructed to deliver no periodical or book into unclean hands."[50] Men would learn to treat public property with respect; that is, they would, if they intended to use Poole's library.

In 1897, a young boy, sixteen years old, had been caught stealing a few books from the New York Public Library. He argued that he needed the books for his studies and faced ruination if convicted; nevertheless, the Board of Trustees, with librarian John Shaw Billings' blessings, pressed charges. Much ill will was generated by the library's harsh treatment of the young man, and the newspapers criticized Billings and the Board. None of this appears to have bothered Billings much. After all, the boy had to be taught respect for the law.[51] Public libraries everywhere were characterized by such rigid inflexibility and arrogant authoritarianism, and it was not long before the public began to suspect the motives of librarians and trustees.

The library's credibility problem was further compounded

by the librarian's vigourous implementation of programs intended to fulfill the library's second purpose - service to the community's leadership. Most librarians were committed to the idea that the capabilities of men varied and were controlled by "nature's laws." It was obvious to men like William Frederick Poole that "the masses of a community have very little of literary and scholarly culture," and while the library should attempt to reach the masses with "redeeming" literature, it must also dedicate itself fully to serving the intellectual leadership of the community.[52] As one influential writer suggested, much of the library's

> Highest usefulness must reach the tax-payer indirectly, and through vicarious channels...The free library will benefit many of its supporters through the minister's sermon and the physician's practice....[53]

According to the Trustees of the Boston Public Library, the librarian and his assistants had a special responsibility to the more "ernest and thoughtful readers" in the community.[54] H.L. Mencken was even more candid when he wrote in defense of the autocratic and aristocratic librarian of the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore. The library, Mencken said, should serve a "relatively civilized minority," and he advised ignoring the "boobs" who only clammered for the latest popular works.[55]

In the light of the continuing authoritarianism and elitism demonstrated by most librarians towards their patrons, it is small wonder that so few people patronized America's public libraries.[56] But, the lack of patronage rarely caused the librarian much con-

cern, for his administrative functions were becoming so extensive that he had less and less time for reflection on either his clientele or the library's purpose.

Pressed on the one hand by ever expanding responsibilities and drawn, on the other, by a general fascination for administration, the "new" librarian began to lose touch with the vision of the founders. Shera described it this way: "The old scholarly librarian of the nineteenth century was passing from the scene, and in his place came administrators and organizers.... A new age of preoccupation with the techniques and economics of the profession had begun...."[57]

These new librarians frowned on the "unsympathetic fossils" who frequently ran libraries.[58] Their dedication was to modern management and efficiency and their days were frequently devoted exclusively to the "practical necessities" of locating space for burgeoning collections and providing for their care.

The librarian's increasing obsession with detail and technique is evidenced in the literature of librarianship for the period.[59] Annual reports took on an increasingly quantitative emphasis with much attention to each year's new record circulation, and with less and less said about the qualitative aspects of the library's program.[60] Librarians, led by men like Melvil Dewey, spent the majority of their waking hours attempting to reduce library work to a "mechanical art," and their mind-numbing articles weighed heavily upon the pages

of the Library Journal.[61] As Butler noted in his classic little Introduction to Library Science, the librarian appeared to stand alone in the "simplicity of his pragmatism: a rationalization of each immediate technical process by itself" was challenge enough for him.

So, as the turn of the century approached, librarians like Dewey had nearly succeeded in their goal of making the library a new bureaucracy adhering to more and more inflexible rules of operation. As a result librarians thought less and less about theoretical questions--especially those dealing with philosophy --and spent more and more time dealing with organization matters.

The American public librarian was beginning to lose touch with the founders' vision of the library's purpose. But the authoritarian and elitist program so consciously pursued by nineteenth century librarians did not disappear. It simply became less obvious in the increasingly aimless and bureaucratic nature of public library service.[62] However, as we shall see, the public librarian's dedication to his civilizing and stabilizing role in society was to surface with a vengence in those times when the nation appeared threatened.

IV. Immigrants, Carnegie, and Disillusionment

In the 1890's came the onset of the "new" immigration from eastern and southern Europe, and an enormous wave of newcomers from Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary, the Balkans, and Italy arrived in America and settled in the nation's larger metropolitan areas. Many American's viewed this influx of strangers with alarm, and were soon asking the same question that George Ticknor and his fellows had asked some thirty years earlier: "Can we afford to let the foreigner remain uneducated?"[63]

Americans, convinced that education could be the panacea for all their ills, answered with vigourous action. As E.L. Godkin, the powerful editor of the Nation, pointed out, these new immigrants were frequently of the lower classes, socially and educationally, and education appeared essential if we were to "keep the immigrants from becoming the tools with which unscrupulous politicians might undermine the foundations of the Republic."[64]

Librarians, like all educators, rose to this new challenge, and programs designed to "Americanize" the immigrant, and thus render him harmless to the American way, sprang up in all the major libraries in the country. Librarians generally noted such positive aspects of this new service, as broadening the mind, deepening the sympathies, allowing each individual to capitalize on his potential excellence, etc. However, they left little doubt

as to the true purpose of their aggressive new programs directed at the immigrants.

One appropriately named librarian (Miss Countryman) proclaimed in 1903:

> I believe still that the library should be an Americanizing institution... Discontent with surroundings and ignorance are the causes of rebellion and disloyalty to one's country, and both of these the library may help to dispel from the foreigner.[65]

Later, the American Library Association issued a pamphlet entitled Why Do We Need A Public Library? This little book was intended to stimulate interest in libraries and was filled with suggestions for use in fund drives. It was sprinkled throughout with quotes which reflected the thinking of American librarians, such as the one from Winston Churchill: "To a very great extent, the librarian is custodian of public morals and the moulder of public men." W. Irene Bullock of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh noted the role of the public library in "making good citizens," and added that this was a "form of patriotism made imperative, by the millions of foreigners coming yearly to our shores."[66]

That the library's services to the immigrant had definite positive values for those able to take advantage of them cannot be denied. But these positive values were the result of the immigrant's persistence and not the librarian's conscious attitude.[67] Most librarians appear to have viewed this new thrust in a

negative light and the individual programs were often repressive and autocratic. Librarians seemed to feel that they enjoyed a mandate from God to enlighten the immigrant and went about their various tasks in a spirit of authoritarianism that reminds one of the "moral stewardship" of an earlier generation of librarians.[68]

The authoritarian nature of the public library was made further evident in the librarian's reaction to the frequent depressions that swept the country, and the profession's public statements were in much the same vein relative to these crises as they had been vis-à-vis the immigrant "problem." In 1893, for instance, when the nation was deep in one of its worst financial crises, librarians across the land were emphasizing the public library's role as a conservator of order.

As one librarian put it, "If society cannot provide work for all, the idle- chronic or temporary- are much safer with a book in the library than elsewhere."[69] In these trying times librarians and educators everywhere stressed the importance of their respective institutions in the "war" to preserve democratic ideas and institutions from demagoguery, communism, and other subversive doctrines.[70]

At the same time, the librarian's superficial dedication to serving the common man became more and more obvious. As financial support diminished, the library consistently struggled to maintain its services to the scholar and "ernest reader," doing so at the

expense of "popular" library programs.[71]

Librarians were further encouraged in their conservative, authoritarian, and elitist stance by the philanthropy of hundreds of wealthy Americans and most notably, of Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie and his fellows considered the library a wise investment in order, stability, and sound economic growth.

Carnegie invested in libraries to a greater degree than any of his wealthy friends, and by 1917 he had given some $41,000,000 for the erection of 1,679 public library buildings throughout the land. The impact of this philanthropy on public library development in this country has been the subject of a number of recent, and excellent, studies.[72] Thus it is not necessary for us to analyze the impact of his philanthropy on the growth of the public library system, but it is appropriate to consider the impact to Carnegie's philanthropy upon the American library profession.

Carnegie was a conservative, rigidly moralistic, and tough-minded individualist who once noted that Spencer's works on social Darwinism had had a profound effect on his life. The Spencerian influence is readily seen in Carnegie's insistence that those communities which received his libraries commit themselves to their continued support. As he noted in his widely read Gospel of Wealth, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves and to provide part of the means by

which "those who desire to improve may do so." The idea was to give the "best and most aspiring poor" the opportunity to improve; the not so good and less aspiring be damned!

In these statements, Carnegie added strong confirmation to the librarian's long held elitist views. They must have found it reassuring when Carnegie, after applauding Enoch Pratt for his generosity in Baltimore, concluded:

> It is safe to say that [the] 37,000 frequenters of the Pratt Library [in 1888] are of more value to Baltimore, to the State, and to the country, than all the inert, lazy, and hopelessly poor in the nation.[73]

He also reinforced their authoritarianism. In an address delivered in 1894, Carnegie revealed his motivation for funding thousands of libraries when he said, "the result of knowledge [gleaned from libraries] is to make men not violent revolutionists, but cautious evolutionists; not destroyers, but careful improvers."[74]

Carnegie's sentiments were shared by philanthropists everywhere. For instance, when Enoch Pratt decided to "give" the People of Baltimore a library, he insisted that its management reflect his values. As a result he selected his friend, Lewis Steiner, M.D., to run the library and appointed a decidedly conservative Board of Trustees; their charge was to "guard" Baltimore's citizens for "democracy". [75]

The big philanthropy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came as a mixed blessing to the American library

profession. For it brought increased demands from wealthy and aggressive patrons who looked to librarians to provide considerable evidence of their success in fulfilling the purpose of the public library in American life. All of those who viewed the library as a stabilizing agent in society assumed that the common man, if properly motivated and rewarded, could learn, and not infrequently, this faith in the common man's capacity to learn was exaggerated. Carnegie, for instance, once wrote in his popular Triumphant Democracy, that the "farmer who threshes his own corn and cuts his firewood has very likely a piano in his family-sitting room, with the Atlantic Monthly on the table, and Tennyson, Gibbon and Macaulay, on his shelves".[76]

Such a naive, and generally unfounded, belief in the average American's interest in cultural matters, led men like Carnegie to scrutinize insistently the statistical records of public libraries seeking evidence of a general "elevation of the Masses." Librarians in turn were forced to analyze carefully, for the first time, the nature of their audience, and to assess their successes and failures in reaching the common man. This self examination precipitated a serious professional crisis--a loss of confidence--as more and more public librarians began to compile the dismal facts relating to the extent and nature of public library use.

The public librarian, pressed by benefactors, and reacting

to problems which were regarded as dangerous to society, designed and initiated a number of new functions and services. These functions included the adding of reference/information services, the initiation of service to children, and the introduction of readers' advisors. Unfortunately, these new services seemed to contribute little to an increase in use or financial support from a generally disinterested public.[77]

Dorothy Canfield Fisher, portrayed the grim mood of many librarians when she noted that the founders thought,

> or no, they did not think, they took for granted--that an educated citizenry...would spontaneously and eagerly throng into the public library in knowledge-hungry crowds, if the doors could be opened to them, using books as tools to advance themselves steadily year by year in good taste, cultivation, good judgement, sound information. There is no doubt that they would be aghast to see that this is not exactly what happens--to put it mildly. They would be horrified by the statistics showing the percentage of our population which cannot read with ease.... They would be staggered by the small proportion of the population of any community which uses the books so freely offered by the public libraries.[78]

Several years earlier, Grace O. Kelly came to the conclusion that,

> On the whole, the public library has presented the curious anomaly of an institution which has been established for the people and supported by the people, but whose direction has been left almost entirely in the hands of independent library boards; or, for the most practical purposes, to individual librarians who have ruled according to personal convictions, opinions, or even idiosyncracies. Wise and scholarly librarians they have often been, but pastors of the people,

> benign rulers, who have not necessarily been agents of demonstrated social needs.[79]

Finally, Clarence Sherman sounded the note of defeat when he wrote that librarians had been forced to abandon,

> The long-cherished hope that the free public library would press on from the environment of its earlier years to reach a constantly expanding population, book-conscious and reading-desirous, until every person who has acquired the mechanics of how to read almost automatically becomes a frequenter of public libraries.[80]

The librarian's disenchantment with the library's invisible public was heightened by the fact that so few actual users made "efficient" use of their local public libraries. They were frustrated by evidence demonstrating that the "uplift theory" was proving inoperative and that people apparently did not progress from the reading of light fiction to ever more respectable fare. Studies of library circulation figures showed that from seventy to eighty percent of public library circulation in the twenties and thirties was made up of fiction.[81]

Discouraged on the one hand by their inability to increase library use significantly, and on the other by their seeming failure to elevate those who did use the library, American public librarians began slowly, almost imperceptably, to abandon their mission as originally defined by the founders. They were less and less able to provide reasons for processes that were being performed in their libraries, and began to define

"functions" such as "recreational reading" or "informational service" as ends in themselves. They had lost their way; most had completely lost sight of the founders' vision, and the few who could still see it had lost their faith in its potential for fulfillment.

The library had proven to be an imperfect panacea, and the librarian had suffered a definite loss of mastery. Beaten and demoralized they drew further into their bureaucratic shells. Convinced that most Americans were unappreciative and unreachable they became increasingly autocratic and elitist, and made their libraries even less appealing to the common man. At the same time, afraid to make an open proclamation of their covert design to concentrate on the elite because they feared it would cost them public support, librarians were forced to put up a rhetorical smokescreen which only partially succeeded in hiding the library's true nature.[82] The American public library had become a bureaucracy; a social institution without a purpose--except perhaps to preserve itself. Nearly two decades would pass before the actions of Hitler and Mussolini would provide the public library with a new, and viable, justification for its existence.

V. Rise of the New Library--Guardian of the People's Right to Know

In the thirties a few librarians began to sense the mindlessness of public librarianship in this country. They were concerned with the librarian's seeming inability to think constructively about theoretical questions, and consequently they initiated a dialogue which eventually produced a new philosophy of public library service in America. Any analysis of that dialogue at this time must be impressionistic and incomplete, for it is difficult to place exact boundaries on the arguments presented and upon the precedence of certain writers over others.[83]

Nevertheless, it is obvious that for the first time in the history of library literature, librarians were being regularly exposed to articles with the word "philosophy" prominently displayed in their titles. Among the most influential of these papers are Arnold K. Borden, "We Need a Philosophy" (1931); James H. Wellard, "A Philosophical Approach to Library Science," (1934); Harold J. Laski, "Uses of the Public Library," (1935); Oscar Orman, "The Philosophy of Librarianship," (1935); Henry Evelyn Bliss, "As to a Philosophy of Librarianship," (1935); Robert Miller, "Search for Fundamentals," (1936); Archibald MacLeish, "The Librarian and the Democratic Process," (1940); and Myra Kolitsch, "Toward a Philosophy of Librarianship," (1945).[84] This period also witnessed the publication of Butler's brilliant little book, Introduction to Library Science (1933), which dealt

with the philosophy of library science (perhaps better than any book before or since) in a cooly analytical and provocative fashion.

The content of the published work on the philosophy of library science was relatively uniform. The authors of papers or books would begin by lamenting the lack of a philosophy, gently chide librarians for the "simplicity of their pragmatism," and then turn to a more or less logical discussion of what they felt the philosophy of librarianship should be. With increasing frequency these works stressed the importance of the library's role as a guardian of the people's right to know.

World events appear to have been largely responsible for the emerging concensus. In Germany Hitler's propaganda machine was proving alarmingly successful, while in Italy, Mussolini was burning books and suppressing libraries with appalling regularity. In the light of these developments the free access to information on social and political matters suddenly took on new significance.[85]

The library was now portrayed as an institution which could play a vital role in promoting and preserving democracy in America by assisting the successful working of self-government. This was to be done by giving all the people free and convenient access to the nation's cultural heritage and the day's social intelligence. In accepting this conception of the library's

role, public librarians were forced to drop, publicly at least, their commitment to authoritarianism. For the idea was to facilitate the democratic process by making the whole spectrum of human knowledge readily available to all who might seek it out--no one could be excluded, and no authoritarian pressures were to be brought to bear on the user for he was to examine the information available and decide for himself.[86]

Indeed, the librarian was suddenly asked to become completely neutral on social, economic, and political questions--at least on the job--and was expected to provide ample information on both sides of the issue in order to enable the user to make an informed decision. Butler made the point with vigor:

> The library is no mission station for the promulgation of an established library gospel that is eternally true. The librarian's duty is not to entice men, against their wills if need be, to convert themselves to his way of thinking. He is merely society's custodian of its cultural archives.[87]

The difference between the new approach and the old was that it insisted that the librarian discard his authoritarian attitude toward his patrons. Author after author emphasized this point: the librarian must not force the patron to learn; he must "allow" him to learn. Earlier librarians had had a different view of the librarian's responsibilities.

This new philosophy had great appeal to librarians for several reasons. First, the conviction that people will make the right decisions if only they have access to the information upon

which a wise decision can be based was a welcome idea. Librarians have always had a deepseated, and often irrational faith in education--especially bookcentered informal education--as a panacea for society's ills. This new philosophy reaffirmed their faith in education's importance in a democratic society. Wheeler and Goldhor, in their popular text on public library administration, summarize this view when they note that the "public library's functions and programs derive from the conviction that books and other printed matter...are powerful, indispensable, agents for bringing enlightenment, new knowledge, encouragement, and inspiration to every member of the community."[88]

Second, it was a mission which appeared at the outset to be viable and achievable. As most librarians interpreted the library as a guardian of the people's right to know, the principle task was to acquire and organize information on all sides of social, political, and economic issues. This, reasoned many librarians, should not be too difficult, and it would allow librarians to continue to indulge their penchant for technical and organizational matters.

A third reason was that it allowed librarians, who were not noted for possessing aggressive and extroverted personalities, to continue their passive approach to library service. They could now justify their passivity by pointing out that they were bound by the library's new philosophy <u>not</u> to try to influence

the user's opinions. Their task was to provide the materials upon which the reader could base his own decisions. As a result they were obligated to remain generally uninvolved in the patron's efforts to make a decision.

Fourth, this philosophy placed the responsibility for library use on the patron, and not the librarian. The librarian need only provide access to the information; the user was responsible for coming to the library to acquire it. The emphasis was on the library as guardian of the information; very little attention was devoted to the dissemination of this information once acquired by the library. Librarians no longer need worry about their inability to interest large numbers of people in their services. All of their attention could be focused on acquiring, organizing, and preserving the library materials. This, of course, was simply more business as usual, but now librarians had a rationale for their action.

Finally, this new philosophy did not conflict with the librarian's elitist leanings. While they were charged with providing access to library materials on a broad and liberal basis, they knew that in reality the audience for the book is self limiting, and that the nature of the library's actual clientele could remain basically unchanged. This suited librarians, for they felt much more comfortable with the middle class patrons who made up the majority of the library's clientele,

than they did with the rough, inarticulate, poorly educated, and unappreciative masses of the country. And so the public library's principle purpose was now defined as the protection of the people's right to know. This new philosophy, accepted by most librarians, controls most thinking about public libraries to this day. However, to say this is not to suggest that there was no dissatisfaction, or that the new purpose did not garner its critics.

In fact, critics of the library as a guardian of the people's right to know attacked along many fronts. However, most of them reacted negatively not so much to the definition of purpose, which most thought was laudable, but rather to the librarian's attitudes and behavior in reaction to the fulfillment of this purpose.

Particularily damaging, based as it was on the impressive Public Library Inquiry of 1947-50, was Robert Leigh's contention that the public library was really a failure as a popularly based institution. Using statistics gathered in the two year study he concluded that only ten percent of the members of the average community made active use of the public library. Furthermore, he noted that these active users did not represent a cross section of the general population, but represented more "than a numerical proportion of those who serve voluntarily on all levels as leaders of opinion and culture in their communities."[89]

The facts and figures hurt, but even more startling was Leigh's insistence that the library should reconsider the notion of open and broadly based programs directed at the total population and instead initiate aggressive and publicly avowed programs intended to meet the information needs of the elite leadership in each community--the library's "natural audience." Librarian's in general reacted negatively to Leigh's suggestion. Unfortunately, their rejection of his proposal seems to have been based more on their fear of public disapproval than on any real commitment to serve the total community equally.[90]

The librarian's obvious, but often unconscious elitism, prompted some critics of the profession to suggest that the public library had "lost touch with the lower class."[91] Such a criticism was rather uninformed, of course, since the public librarian had never really been in "touch" with the lower classes. Nevertheless, critics of the library's elitism insist that the public library should attempt to stimulate library use by the lower classes. Librarians generally rejected this call to action because they did not want to extend their servises to the lower-classes: it was expensive, less "rewarding," and besides, it was well known that the lower classes had little or no interest in libraries.

The librarians passivity has been continually attacked, but is the center of a considerable debate today. Activists argue

that the library must rechannel its energies into an active information dissemination program in place of the passive book-centered approach so common to public libraries. Books, however, remain the librarian's favorite package for information, and service remains in a category legitimately labeled "passive."

Finally, another group of critics attacked the library's purpose as not really being a purpose at all. Writers like Paul Wasserman maintain that purpose must be specifically defined before any meaningful evaluation of the public library's success can be made. These critics, mainly scholars interested in quantitative measures of public library effectivenees, disagree about what the library's purpose should be; but they all agree that it must be more carefully defined before it will be really achievable.[92]

And so, the public library, conceived as a deterrent to irresponsibility, intemperance, and rampant democracy; and administered in an elitist and authoritarian fashion by librarians and trustees from the middle and upper classes, came in time to be viewed by librarians as a guardian of the people's right to know.

Unfortunately, librarians were unable to bring themselves to wholeheartedly accept and implement this new philosophy, and as a result it has never been carefully thought out or thoroughly tested. At the same time, there appears to be a relentlessly spreading indifference, if not hostility, to the public library

in the minds of Americans. The American public seems disenchanted with the public library. People no longer see the library as important--at least not in relation to other community services--and public libraries everywhere find themselves in a precarious financial situation as a result.

The very existence of the public library appears in jeoprady; public librarians appear both concerned and confused. They find themselves asking, as did their predecessors over 100 years ago, what is the purpose of the public library? What the library's purpose will be in the future is anyone's guess; what it should be is a question which must be openly, honestly, and systematically debated. It is hoped that the present study can stimulate and serve this dialogue by emacipating the library profession, at least for a moment, from its dependency on an idealized history.

NOTES

1. This essay cannot hope to cover all of the voluminous literature dealing with American public library history. Our approach will be critical and analytic. Readers who prefer an in-depth look at the sources should see the notes and bibliographies in the following works: Francis G. Collier, "A History of the American Public Library Movement Through 1880" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1953); Sidney H. Ditzion, Arsenals of a Democratic Culture; A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle Atlantic States From 1850 to 1900 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1947); Jesse Hauk Shera, Foundations of the Public Library: the Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England, 1629-1855 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); Robert E. Lee, Continuing Education for Adults through the American Public Library, 1833-1964 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1966); and George S. Bobinski, Carnegie Libraries; Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969). For coverage of the extensive body of unpublished graduate research see Michael H. Harris, Guide to Research in American Library History (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1968). For an impressionistic critique of historical literature in library science, especially the antiquarian works

not analyzed here, see Jesse H. Shera, "The Literature of American Library History," Library Quarterly 15 (1945): 1-24. For an annotated bibliography of the literature dealing with contemporary public libraries see Allie Beth Martin, A Strategy for Public Library Change...(Chicago: American Library Association, 1972).

2. Library historians have contributed mightily to the myth of public library origins. However, only a few works have had seminal importance in directing the interpretation of American public library development. All of these works are written in the progressive tradition, and view the library as part of a liberal reform movement in this country; idealistic, equalitarian, and humanitarian in nature. The works in question, ranked by this author in the order of their impact, are Jesse Shera, Foundations of the Public Library; (2) Sidney Ditzion, Arsenals of a Democratic Culture; (3) Oliver Garceau, The Public Library in the Political Process (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949); and (4) Robert E. Lee, Continuing Education for Adults Through the American Public Library; 1833-1964. Library historians have generally followed the standard interpretation of reform, which until a few years ago defined American reform as "liberal", i.e. democratic, humanitarian, and altruistic. For an example of this interpretation applied to the situation in Boston see Henry Steele

Commager, ed., Living Ideas in America (New York: Harper, 1951). Commager notes that the library movement grew out of the general reform movement, and "it was all part of that faith in democracy and the perfectibility of man. . ." (p. 572). For samples of the work of Shera, Ditzion, and Lee see Michael H. Harris, ed., Reader in American Library History (Washington: NCR, 1971).

3. This writer is not familiar with a single work on public library history which does not attribute much of the motivation for the founding of public libraries to the founders' faith in the perfectibility of man. The nice logic of the argument stated in the text above falls to pieces if the founders did not believe in the perfectibility of man. The cynicism of the "founders," so unanimously overlooked by historians in their attempt to place the library movement in the liberal reform tradition, negates most of their arguments. The tripartite statement cited in the text is from Lee, Continuing Education for Adults Through the Public Library.

4. The studies which make the most progress along these lines are Shera's Foundations of the Public Library, Chapter 7, and Gladys Spencer, The Chicago Public Library (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1943). For a search for factors common to "a society which establishes a public library," see Lewis Stieg, "Notes on the Origins of Public Libraries in California, 1850-1900," Library Quarterly 22 (1952): 263-69.

5. The history of the Boston Public is summarized in Walter Muir Whitehill, The Boston Public Library: A Centennial History (Cambridge:

Harvard University Press, 1956). For a fuller quotation of the early reports and correspondence see Horace G. Wadlin, The Public Library of the City of Boston; A History (Boston: Printed by the Trustees, 1911).

6. This letter is quoted in full in Wadlin, The Public Library of the City of Boston, pp. 23-26. Everett was rather irritated at Bigelow, for it seems that the mayor had ignored Everett's earlier attempts to give his documents collection to the city. Everett appears to have felt that this was an attempt to rob him of the honor of being the founder of the Boston Public Library.

7. Ibid., 27-28.

8. Charles Coffin Jewett wrote the letter to Ticknor on 15 May, 1867, giving him credit for the basic structure and services of the Boston Public Library. Jewett's letter is quoted in Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor, (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1876) Vol. II, p. 304.

9. For a modern study based on a careful analysis of Ticknor's letters, and a thorough knowledge of the Boston of his day see David Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

10. We know a great deal more about the Boston of Ticknor's day, and of the patrician class that lived there, than did earlier library historians like Shera and Ditzion. Especially important

in this regard is Tyack's biography of Ticknor, and the following works: Martin Green, The Problem of Boston: Some Readings in Cultural History (London: Longman's, 1966); Nathan I. Huggins, Protestants Against Poverty; Boston's Charities, 1870-1900 (Westport, Conn.:Greenwood, 1971); Harold and James Kirker, Bulfinch's Boston, 1787-1817. (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1964).

11. Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 154.

12. Quoted in Wadlin, The Public Library of the City of Boston; A History, pp. 27-28.

13. Quoted in Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins, p. 233.

14. The dominant and conservative elements in American society have always seen education as essential to any program of action directed at preserving the status quo. As Rossiter notes, "education looms importantly in the literature of conservatism... its great mission... is to act as a conserving, civilizing force; to convey to each man his share of the inherited wisdom of the race, to train him to lead a moral, self-disciplined life, and to foster a love of order and respect for authority..." Conservatism in America, p. 158.

15. The Famous Boston Public Library Report is officially cited as City Document No. 37, Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, July 1852 (Boston, 1852). It is reproduced in full in Shera's Foundations of the Public Library, Appendix V; the quote is found on page 280-81. Shera considers this Report the "first real credo of the relation of the library to the social order.

What was said then has been repeated many times since, but seldom with equal clarity and precision." (p. 181). The Report's widespread influence probably derived from its conservative appeal, which promised that public libraries would contribute to the stabilization of society; to the control of the masses. It was only later that librarians and historians began to read a liberal tone into the Report.

16. Ibid., p. 281.

17. This seems to be the basic disagreement between the two men. Everett leaned naturally towards an audience made up of Boston's intellectual elite, while Ticknor wanted the library to serve the "less favored classes of the community..." See Life Letters and Journals of George Ticknor, Vol. II, p. 304.

18. Quoted in Whitehill, Boston Public Library, p. 25. Many historians, most notably Shera, have attributed part or most of the motivation for the public library to the desire of a few prominent scholars to acquire large research collections from which they might mine their scholarly works.

But Ticknor does not appear to have viewed the library as being first and foremost a research institution. Everett did, however, and considerable progress was made in that direction while he was President of the Board of Trustees.

19. All the phrases are from a letter from Ticknor to Everett quoted in Ibid., p. 24.

20. Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins, 2.

21. Ditzion, Arsenals of a Democratic Culture, pp. 16-17.

22. Green, The Problem of Boston, p. 84, and Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins, p. 185.

23. Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins, p. 157.

24. Quoted in ibid., pp. 185-186.

25. Garceau, The Public Library in the Political Process, pp. 20-21.

26. Quoted in C. Randolph Benson, Thomas Jefferson as Social Scientist (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), p. 179.

27. Quoted in Benson, Thomas Jefferson as Social Scientist, pp. 159-60.

28. Jefferson rarely demonstrated any desire to control or dictate the behavior of others as Ticknor did. However, perhaps it is fair to note that the situation might have been different had Jefferson lived around the turn of the twentieth century. For Jefferson would probably have been just as suspicious of the new urban immigrants as Ticknor was. After all, Jefferson often expressed his disdain and fear of the urban industrialized populations; the yeoman farmer was his choice as the ideal citizen for a democracy.

29. Quoted in Tyack, George Ticknor, p. 212.

30. Ibid., p. 181. One scholar Phillip Ennis, seems to have intuitively hit upon the truth that public libraries, like education in general, were intended to resist "the forces which

had been threatening the boundaries of social order since the beginning of the industrial order..." Those evils included crime, intemperance, promiscuous sex, ignorance, poverty, insanity and a host of lesser evils. Unfortunately Ennis does not develop his conception at any length. Phillip H. Ennis, "The Library Consumer: Patterns and Trends," Library Quarterly 34 (1964) : 163-178.

31. Few historians have seriously suggested that the public library was the product of a desire on the part of the masses for library service. Most historians have reached the conclusion reached by Collier, that: "it is clear that there was little evidence of popular demand for free public libraries... in most cases the town libraries were established by a group of scholarly and influential citizens." Collier, History of the American Public Library Movement Through 1880, p. 87. Our contention that public libraries were not viewed as "democratic" institutions by librarians and trustees is documented in ft. nt. 33 below. But perhaps the most obvious, and conclusive, evidence of the undemocratic nature of the American public library is to be found in the history of the exclusion of Blacks from public library service- overtly in the South, covertly in the North. This story still needs telling for the North; for the South see Eliza Atkins, "The Government and Administration of Public Library Service to Negroes in the South," (Ph. D. diss., University of

Chicago, 1940).

32. Studies abound which analyze the American public library trustee. Two of the most substantial are Carleton Joeckel, The Government of the American Public Library, especially Chapter eight; and Garceau's The Public Library in the Political Process, Chapter two. Garceau concludes that "all of the fifty boards analyzed are under the control of people from the middle class and up", and goes on to say that the two groups lacking any substantive representation are agriculture and labor. Histories of public libraries which devote some space to study of the board are Phillis Dain, "The New York Public Library: A History of its Founding and Early Years," (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia, 1966), especially pp. 189-193: and C. H. Cramer, Open Shelves and Open Minds: A History of the Cleveland Public Library (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1972). Despite the extent of the evidence available on twentieth century public library trustees, no systematic study of nineteenth century trustees has yet been undertaken. Such a study will be necessary before any final conclusions can be drawn.

33. There is a good deal of evidence suggesting that librarians and trustees never really accepted Ticknor's commitment to "uplifting" the masses, a fact most historians overlook. The Boston Public Library was, for instance, one of the last libraries in the country to liberalize loan restrictions; to open its stacks; to institute

Sunday hours. Furthermore the punitive measures taken against individuals who "abused" their library priviledges by library administrations were certainly unjustified, and unthinkable, in a liberal and democratic institution. Examples abound; one need only examine the early reports of public libraries. For the developments in Boston see Joseph Borome, "The Life and Letters of Justin Winsor" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1950), especially pp. 131-133. During the Sunday opening controversy in Boston a liberal proponent of Sunday opening noted that the recalcitrant trustees were not known to "mix with or have any confidence in the plain people." Quoted in Borome, Charles Coffin Jewett (Chicago: American Library Association, 1951), p. 139. The most famous illustration of the librarians' disdain for the working man is the case of "Duncan's Cloths." In the 1890's, James Duncan, the President of the Baltimore Federation of Labor, claimed that he had been "sneered at" by the staff of the Peabody Library when he entered the library in his working clothes. See Phillip Kalisch, The Enoch Pratt Free Library: A Social History (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1969), p. 84.

It might be well to reemphasize here that the dominant classes in American society viewed the library as one part of a total educational program designed to control the irresponsible masses. The same men sitting on library boards were often serving on local school boards, college boards of trustees, or

even writing the textbooks to be used in America's schools. These books, analyzed by Ruth Elson, were uniformly authoritarian; teaching a consistent value system which emphasized patriotism, nationalism, reverence for God and one's Parents. The social tenor of these books was consistently conservative. See Ruth Elson, Guardians of Tradition, (Norman: University of Nebraska, 1964).

34. Our generalizations relative to the attitudes and motives of early American public librarians must be limited due to the lack of substantive studies upon which to base such assessments. In this regard we are open to criticism for basing our generalizations on the nature of nineteenth century librarians upon the behavior of such men as Poole, Winsor and Dewey. For each in his own way was sui generis. However, we would argue that they do accurately reflect the attitudes of most librarians towards the purpose of the library. We recognize, of course, that the average librarian was not the intellectual peer of these men. Indeed women soon began to take over until by 1950 they made up over 90 per cent of the professionals working in public libraries. These women were often retiring sorts and generally followed the male leadership in the field. As Dewey, who had an especially strong influence on women, once said, "its not nervous work... doesn't push a timid girl into contact with the rough side of the world." Quoted in Cecil Roseberry, History of the New York

State Library (Albany: New York State Library, 1970). Few in-depth critical studies of American librarians are available. The best are Borome's studies of Jewett and Winsor, William Williamson's, William Frederick Poole and the Modern Library Movement (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963) and Edward G. Holley, Charles Evans: American Bibliographer (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1963). Some 74 librarians, many of them public librarians, are covered in the Dictionary of American Biography. The most detailed analysis of the "Public Librarian", is Alice I. Bryan, The Public Librarian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952). This study revealed that "public librarians are recruited mainly from Native American stock, from families with better than average formal education and occupational status, and that the librarians seek to perpetuate their educational backgrounds in their choices of husbands and wives." (p. 54).

35. Ticknor failed on a number of occasions in his attempts to reach the common man. He often noted that he wanted his History of Spanish Literature to be a book of "interest and moral utility" to the general reader, and yet it turned out to be so pedantic and difficult that even scholars had difficulty wading through it. Thackary once noted that Ticknor's History had become the book that everyone owns but nobody reads. Tyack, George Ticknor, p. 142.

36. It does not appear necessary to outline the experiments

undertaken at Boston and elsewhere in order to increase use or entice more people into the library. For the details on these matters see Whitehill, The Boston Public Library; Borome, Charles Coffin Jewett, and Collier, The History of the American Public Library Movement Through 1880.

37. Library Journal 4 (1879): 225.

38. Ibid., 6 (1881): 63. Numerous early Presidential speeches hit this theme. Herbert Putnam wrote in 1904 that "the duty of our libraries is to let no guilty ignorance escape." Ibid. 29 (1904): c26. For an analysis of the Presidential Addresses see C. G. Sparks, "Presidential Addresses Made to the American Library Association, 1876-1951." (Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1952).

39. Quoted in Collier, History of the American Public Library Movement Through 1880, p. 280.

40. J. P. Quincy, "Free Libraries," In Public Libraries in the United States of America (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), p. 402.

41. Quoted in Ditzion, Arsenals of a Democratic Culture, p. 108.

42. Things went fairly well at the Boston Public until 1877 when the Board found itself beset by critics. Alderman O'Brien had the audacity to suggest that there were "hundreds of citizens who could fill the position of librarian" after a few weeks experience with just as much ability as Mr. Winsor." An editorial

writer in the July 31, 1877 issue of the Library Journal expressed resentment at the suggestion.

43. William I. Fletcher, "Public Libraries in Manufacturing Communities," In Public Libraries in the United States (1876), p. 410. See also George S. Bobinski,"William Isaac Fletcher, An Early American Library Leader," Journal of Library History 5 (1970): 101-18.

44. For a comprehensive description of this controversy see Esther Jane Carrier, Fiction in Public Libraries, 1876-1900 (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1965).

45. The quotes are from Winsor's paper entitled "Free Libraries and Readers," Library Journal 1 (1876): 63-67. One recent writer has referred to the librarian's attitude as "cultural imperialism."

46. Library Journal 1 (1876): 99. In many circles the issue was reduced to a simple contest: "Beer vs. Books." The Rev. J. F. Clarke, noted that recreational reading is provided to the citizens of Boston for the same reason that the city provides Public Gardens, Public Baths, or music on the Common. "Because they tend to refine and elevate the people... to make them contented, cheerful and happy,... [they] make the whole community more safe and peaceful..." Library Journal 4 (1879): 356.

47. William I. Fletcher, Public Libraries in America, p. 32. As late as 1918 librarians were taking strong stands on the

choice of books for libraries. Cornelia Marvin Pierce, the pioneering and plucky state librarian of Oregon wrote: "Remember that bad books make criminals, wrecks, and useless men and women. Cast out every book not wholly true and fine." Quoted in Melissa Anne Brisley, "Cornelia Marvin Pierce: Pioneer in Library Extension, "Library Quarterly 38 (1968): 144. Since those days librarians have backed themselves into a real dilemma. They argue for public support on the grounds that reading books can have a positive beneficial impact on the individual and society at large. At the same time they resist the censor with the argument that books cannot hurt anyone. Poole, Winsor, and their collegues would never have gotten caught in such a contradiction.

48. Library Journal 7 (1882): 201.

49. Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 120. The arrogance of public librarians is sometimes overwhelming. Samuel Sweet Green writing in 1876 noted that the librarian should approach his work with a "democratic spirit." However, he continues, just "because artificial distinctions of rank have been abolished here," one should not be led to believe that "there need be no recognition of the real differences among men in respect to taste, intellect, and character." The librarian, he concludes, will always be above most-- "the superiority of his culture will always enable him to secure the respectful treatment which belongs to him..." Samuel S. Green, "Personal Relations Between Librarians and

Readers," Library Journal 1 (1876): 80.

50. Quoted in Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 51.

51. Dain, New York Public Library, p. 260. For a careful study of another librarian of the period see Sidney Ditzion, "The Social Ideas of a Library Pioneer: Josephus Nelson Larned, 1836-1913," Library Quarterly 13 (1943): 113-131.

52. Library Journal 1 (1876): 49.

53. J. P. Quincy, "Free Libraries," p. 399.

54. Quoted in Whitehill, History of the Boston Public Library, p. 51.

55. Kalisch, The Enoch Pratt Free Library, p. 121.

56. There were, of course, other factors which influenced use: literacy; the availability of other outlets for books; the growth of the other media, etc. Two illustrations of public library registration in the 19th century might be useful. In 1867-68, when Boston was spending some $30,000 on its public library only 12,000 of its 250,000 inhabitants were registered as borrowers. In 1890 the Chicago public had less than 30,000 registered borrowers and was serving a population of nearly 500,000.

57. Shera, "The Literature of American Library History," p. 16. Since I am now describing what I feel to be the various "stages" in public library development, it might be well to cite works which present other interpretations fo the various stages. John Cotton Dana lists five concluding with the "critical, evaluative,

and educating stage...," the latter his own era, of course. Libraries; Addresses and Essays (New York, 1916), p. 66. Learned sees three stages; the last being "modern", self-assured, and eager to serve. William S. Learned, The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1924), p. 66. Robert E. Lee, Continuing Education for Adults Through the American Public Library, presents yet another list.

58. The phrase is Dewey's.

59. A number of studies analyze the nature of this literature. All conclude that librarians were increasingly concerned with technical and organizational matters. See for example, Carolyn Foreman, "An Analysis of Publications issued by the American Library Association, 1907-1957" (Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1959); Frank Dale Hankins, "The Treatment of Basic Problems in the Library Journal, 1900-1930" (Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1951); Lucy Jane Maddox, "Trends and Issues in American Librarianship as Reflected in the Papers and Proceedings of the American Library Association, 1876-1885" (Ph. D. diss., University of Michigan, 1958); and C. G. Sparks, "Presidential Addresses Made to the American Library Association."

60. The American mind of this period had a "quantitative cast." The American's solution for most problems was quantitative and, as Commager has noted, everything in American life "yielded to the sovereign remedy of numbers." It should come as no surprise

that librarians were forced" to play the numbers game" as well. Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 7.

61. Those complaining of the dull pragmatism of today's library literature should spend a few days with the Library Journal from 1876-1900.

62. Historians are fond of citing this period (1876-1920) as the time when the "tradition of democratic service" was established. While it is true that an increased number of functions were being carried out, there is very little evidence attesting to a change in the librarian's attitude towards his clientele. For studies of the new functions see Samuel Rothstein, The Development of Reference Services Through Academic Traditions, Public Library Practice, and Special Librarianship (Chicago: American Library Association, 1955); Harriet Long, Public Library Service to Children (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1969); and Margaret Monroe, Library Adult Education: The Biography of an Idea (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1963).

63. The question was asked frequently in the literature. See for instance, J. M. Campbell, "Books in Foreigh Languages," In The Library And Its Contents (New York: Wilson, 1925), p. 76.

64. Quoted in Merle Curti, Growth of American Thought. 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 479. The history of American nativism during the period under consideration here is summarized

in John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963).

65. Quoted in James A. Wellard, Book Selection (London: Grafton, 1937), p. 56.

66. Why Do We Need A Public Library (Chicago: American Library Association, 1910), p. 18.

67. Timothy L. Smith notes that the immigrants were often highly motivated towards education for economic, communal, and civic reasons. It probably was not too difficult to incorporate them in the "Americanization" process. "Immigrant Social Aspirations and American Education, 1880-1930," American Quarterly 21 (1969): 523-43.

68. One need only read the articles scattered through the pages of the literature to sense this attitude. One comes away with the feeling that their's was a missionary zeal rarely equaled in our professional history. One quote might help convey the intensity of their belief in the importance of their work. William S. Learned wrote in 1924 that "the habitual activities of the modern public librarian exhaust themselves in pure service of a high order voluntarily sought by every age and grade of individual for almost every public and private purpose-- a service rendered without pose or pressure, solely on its merits." William S. Learned, The Public Library and the Diffusion of

Knowledge (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1924, p. 52.

69. T. L. Kelso, "Some Economical Features of Public Libraries," Arena 7 (1893): 711.

70. Curti, Growth of American Thought, p. 579. World War I provided another cause for the zealous public librarian. Theodore Wesley Koch's Books in the War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), mirrors the librarian's commitment, and is aptly subtitled "The Romance of Library War Service." See also Frank B. Woodford, Parnassus on Main Street: A History of the Detroit Public Library (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), Chapter 21. "The Library Goes to War."

71. Again, to document this case would require too much space here. The facts are clear, however, to anyone familiar with public library annual reports for the periods of 1893-95, and 1929-35. In each period public libraries were forced to curtail services. Ordinarily the services cut were those which had the most appeal to the library's lower and middle class audience. That is, branch library service, children's services, the purchase of fiction (quality non-fiction was always given priority), and all types of extension services. It is interesting to note that the report literature being issued today indicates that the same process is underway in our current financial crisis.

72. Two critical studies on Carnegie philanthropy have recently appeared. They are, David I. MacLeod, Carnegie Libraries in

Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society, 1968) and George S. Bobinski, Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on Public Library Development (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969). At first reading these books would appear to present conflicting interpretations of the Carnegie gifts and their impact. Actually the difference lies in the scope of the two studies. Bobinski exhaustively examines Carnegie's giving in relation to its impact on the growth of the American public library and concludes, rightly we think, that it was extensive. He does not, however, consider Carnegie's motives, nor does he deal with the impact of Carnegie's thinking on the public library's purpose. MacLeod on the other hand devotes considerable space to the latter two subjects using Wisconsin as a test case. The two books, taken together, constitute a major contribution to American public library history. Also important in understanding Carnegie is the biography by Joseph Frazier Wall, Andrew Carnegie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

73. Andrew Carnegie, The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays. Edited by Edward C. Kirkland (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 38. In the same tract Carnegie argues that the "man of wealth" should become a "trustee" for his "poor brethren, bringing to their service his superior Wisdom...doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves." (p. 25).

74. Quoted in Wall, Andrew Carnegie, p. 821.

75. Kalisch, Enoch Pratt Free Library, p. 70.

76. Andrew Carnegie, Triumphant Democracy: Or Fifty Years March of the Republic (New York, 1886), p. 106. It is difficult to say how much of this is pure rhetoric. However, one of the tragedies of American public library history is the librarian's continuing inability to understand the average American, while at the same time over-estimating the library's ability to solve his problems. Heart rending examples abound in our literature. One is William Howard Brett, the Director of the Cleveland Public Library, addressing the Ohio Library Association and saying (and believing!) that if the library's critics would just consider the good the public library does:

> "They would be more ready to tax themselves to build libraries, than to build almshouses, for there certainly is a relationship between intelligence and thrift. They would be more ready to tax themselves for libraries and collections of books, than for insane asylums... (It is quite likely that if there had been more traveling libraries and more books throughout the farming townships of Ohio, there would be fewer farmers' wives in the insane asylum..."

Quoted in Linda Anne Eastman, Portrait of a Librarian: William Howard Brett (Chicago: American Library Association, 1940), pp. 33-34.

77. We don't mean to suggest, of course, that circulation figures were not rising; they were. But, the problem, more and more obvious, was that the percentage of the total population using the library was remaining constant. Studies of public library use abound. Useful summaries of these studies are found

in Bernard Berelson, The Library's Public, and Douglas M. Knight and E. Shepley Nourse, Libraries at Large (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1969). Public librarians were devastated when the found that they had been completely ignored in the monumental and highly touted Recent Social Trends in the United States (New York: McGraw Hill, 1933). For the debate over the significance of this omission see G. F. Bowerman, "Library Representation in Recent Social Trends," Library Journal 58 (1933): 259-61, and Jesse Shera, "Recent Social Trends and Future Library Policy," Library Quarterly 3 (1933): 339-353.

78. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, "The Stronghold of Freedom," (1939) in Henry Steele Commager, ed., Living Ideas in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 600. In the October 1896 Library Journal, Mary Salome Cutler noted that once a public library is established "the circulation surprises the most sanguine.... But only 20 percent of the population ever set foot within the library, and when a stranger asks the way within a block of the building, a fairly intelligent-looking workman does not appear to know there is such a thing as the public library."

79. Grace O. Kelly, "The Democratic Function of Public Libraries," Library Quarterly 4 (1934): 7-8.

80. Clarence Sherman, "The definition of Library Objectives," in Current Issues in Library Administration edited by Carleton

Joeckel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 26-27. Alvin Johnson's report, to the Carnegie Corporation in 1916, often considered a boost to public libraries, was in reality a rather dismal assessment. For awhile some libraries appeared to be having a salutory impact on their communities; most people seemed uninterested in reading and those who were, checked out mostly fiction. See MacLeod, Carnegie Libraries in Wisconsin, p. 101.

81. A typical example is that in 1930 the circulation of the Enoch Pratt Library was 83 percent fiction. Kalisch, Enoch Pratt Library, p. 153.

82. Some librarians, especially a few library educators. refused to take this approach. Douglas Waples maintained in 1939 that "the librarian's first responsibility is to satisfy the demands of scholarship as fully as he can...." He suggests that the masses should get their reading at the corner drugstore and that the following sign should be placed in the library:

> Mike Flanagan's drugstore, for obvious reasons of self-interest, has agreed to stock no books of importance to the serious reader, and we, for the same reason, have agreed to stock nothing else.

"People and Libraries," in Carleton Joeckel, ed., Current Issues in Library Administration, p. 370.

83. A good bibliography of this literature can be found in Patricia Pierce, "A Study of the Philosophy of Librarianship; A Review of the Relevant Literature, 1930-1950," (Master's thesis, Drexel Institute of Technology, 1951).

84. Arnold K. Borden, "We Need a Philosophy, " Libraries, 26 (1931): 175-76; James Howard Wellard, "A Philosophical Approach to Library Science, " Wilson Library Bulletin 9 (1934): 206-07; Harold J. Laski, "Uses of the Public Library," Library Journal 60 (1935): 909-912; Oscar C. Orman, "The Philosophy of Librarianship," ALA Bulletin 29 (1935): 820-27; Henry Evelyn Bliss, "As to a Philosophy of Librarianship," Library Quarterly 5 (1935): 232-35; Robert A. Miller, "Search for Fundamentals," Library Journal 61 (1936): 298; Archibald MacLeish, "The Librarian and the Democratic Process," ALA Bulletin 34 (1940): 385-88; Myra Kolitsch, "Toward a Philosophy of Librarianship," Library Quarterly 15 (1945): 25-31.

85. Ruth A. Ogilvie, "Keeper of the Keys," Wilson Library Bulletin 14 (1940): 640-41, and Archibald MacLeish, "The Library and the Nation," in Books and Libraries in Wartime edited by Pierce Butler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945). See also David K. Berninghausen, "The Librarian's Commitment to the Library Bill of Rights," Library Trends 19 (1970); 19-38.

86. For a concise statement of this philosophy as applied to book selection see Paul Bixler, "Censorship and Selection: The Librarian as a Trustee of the Public's Right to Know," In The Nature and Development of the Library Collection (Champaign, Illinois: Illini Union Bookstore for the University of Illinois

Library School, 1957), pp. 117-131. There is some doubt about how seriously librarians took this new philosophy. For a case study of the situation in California see Marjorie Fiske, Book Selection and Censorship; A Study of School and Public Libraries in California (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959).

87. Pierce Butler, Introduction to Library Science (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), p. 105.

88. Joseph L. Wheeler and Herbert Goldhor, Practical Administration of Public Libraries (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 3.

89. Robert D. Leigh, The Public Library in the United States. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 49. Leigh based his comments on findings reported in Bernard Bevelson's The Library's Public. This argument is gaining strength. See for example the papers in Ralph W. Conant, ed. The Public Library and the City (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965). One of the most articulate and persuasive proponents of this approach is Dan Lacy who recently wrote:

> It is extremely important that the library be available and be greatly strengthened to offer its diversity to the lone inquirer, to the small but levening number who will seek to shape a more valid image of the realities we must encounter - the writers, the speakers, the leaders who will guide our nation's response.

Dan Lacy, "Social Change and the Library; 1945-1980," In Douglas M. Knight and E. Shipley Nourse, eds. Libraries at Large (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1969), p. 15.

90. The Inquiry findings were met by stoney silence by the majority of American librarians. Only a few welcomed the results and supported Leigh's suggestions for "alternative plans". For a recent analysis of this matter see James M. Hilliard, "A Profession Goes Mad," Library Journal 95 (1970): 42-43.

91. The best statement of this case, although there are many, is Kathleen Molz, "The Public Library: The People's University?" American Scholar 34 (1965): 95-102.

92. See Paul Wasserman, "Methodology for the Formulation of Objectives in Public Libraries," In Paul Wasserman and Mary Lee Bundy, eds. Reader in American Library Administration (Washington: NCR, 1968), pp. 141-45; and Ralph Blasingame, "Libraries In A Changing Society," Library Journal (1972): 1667-1671. Both would maintain that the statements of basic objectives of public libraries as found in the various public library standards are so vague as to be meaningless.

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APPENDIX I

A Note Dealing with the Literature on Reform in America

Historians have always attempted to interpret the history of the library in relation to its coeval culture, and most have related the rise of the public library to the reform movement of the nineteenth century. Thus, pivotal interpretations of American reform have had considerable influence on the writing of American library history.

Library historians have generally been in agreement with the standard interpretation of American reform as a struggle for human betterment and a challenge to injustice and a repressive status quo. The movement was seen as liberal, humanitarian, and idealistic. This view is concisely presented in Arthur M. Schlesinger, The American as Reformer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), and in Henry S. Commager, The Era of Reform; 1830-1860 (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1960).

Recently, historians have begun to question this view of American reform. For an attempt to sort out the various new interpretations of reform see G. S. Griffin, The Ferment of Reform, 1830-1860 (New York: Crowell, 1967).

A strong revisionist movement appears to be gaining the field, and it is turning the interpretation of reform in this country upside down. According to this school, much of American reform was conservative, self-interested, moralistic, and authoritarian.

It is not necessary to list all of the revisionist studies, but a number of the more influential must be noted here. For two studies of religious reform in America, which contend that the principle motivation of such reform was to make man conform to particular conceptions of "morality and decency" in order to insure the status quo see, Charles I. Foster, An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), and Clifford S. Griffin, Their Brothers Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960). Since so many early library founders, and many librarians, were part of this movement, the revisionist interpretations take on real significance for the study of public library history.

More specifically, library historians have usually pictured the public library movement as part of the educational reform movement which swept the country near the middle of the nineteenth century. In the past, historians viewed this movement as a victory for a "rational, enlightened working class, led by idealistic and humanitarian intellectuals, triumphantly wresting free public education from a selfish, wealthy elite and from the bigoted proponents of orthodox religion." The revisionist scholars, much in the limelight these days, contend that this interpretation is little more than a "regressive

fantasy." By far the most influential of these revisionists in Michael B. Katz. His various works are considered models of the "new" research in the history of education. His most important book is The Irony of Early School Reform; Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), but also see Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools; The Illusion of Educational Change in America (New York: Praeger, 1971), and School Reform: Past and Present (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971). In much the same vein is Colin Greer, The Great School Legend: A Revisionist Interpretation of American Public Education (New York: Basic Books, 1971). Two other studies critical of the "myth" of public school origins and development which are pertinent to this study are Henry J. Perkinson, The Imperfect Panacea: American Faith in Education, 1865-1965 (New York: Random House, 1968), and Raymond E. Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces that have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

Finally, there are several studies of general reform in this country around the turn of the century which are both instructive and provocative. They are, Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age; Social Reform in Boston, 1880-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954); John G. Sproat,

The Best Men; Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); and Nathan Irvin Huggins, Protestants Against Poverty; Boston's Charities, 1870-1900 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Corp., 1971).